

OLD JOHN GILBERT.

One of America's Greatest Comedians Who Died Recently.

SOME OF HIS STAGE EXPERIENCES.

The Only Time He Ever Forgot His Part—His Favorite Characters—Busts of Gilbert and Booth.

The late John Gilbert had probably as strong a hold on the American theatre-going public as any actor ever had. He was a connoisseur of the first water, and his audiences regarded him as few actors have been regarded in this country.



THE GILBERT BUST.

Mr. Gilbert's career was so long a one that even a catalogue of his engagements would be too voluminous for a short sketch. In 1862 he joined Wallack's company in New York and remained in that city during the rest of his professional life.

Of the many characters which he took, he preferred Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Anthony Absolute, Lord Ogleby, John Thornberry and Old Dorothea. The fame of his Sir Anthony Absolute entitles it to be placed at the head of the list. It is difficult to believe that the choleric old Englishman ever had a better representative. His figure, his face and his voice fitted the part exactly; the naturalness of his choleric outbursts was extraordinary; the dryness of his humor perfect, and his whole carriage an absolute reproduction of the old time manner.

His Sir Peter was a companion piece of almost equal merit, but inferior. It was a little deficient in polish. The ideal Sir Peter ought to have an air more courtly than that which Mr. Gilbert imparted to him; but perhaps even this objection is open to the charge of hypercriticism. By way of contrast with the explosive Sir Anthony takes Old Dorothea, in "The Road to Ruin." No more perfect picture of probity, benevolence and tenderness could be imagined. There is almost as much pathos in the old man's honest outbursts of indignation as in his moments of forgiveness and reconciliation.

During the early days of his career Mr. Gilbert appeared in New Orleans. He has related an incident that occurred during his stay in the Crescent city.

He had been assigned to the important role of Sir Frederick Vernon in "Rob Roy." He knew his lines perfectly, but when he went upon the stage and attempted to speak he could not utter a word. The air grew black and he became faint almost to the point of falling. Then the audience began to hiss. This, in a measure, restored him to his senses, but at best he could only mumble through the part, and he retired from the scene disheartened and mortified. It is said to be the first and only time during his long career that he ever forgot his part or was hissed by an audience.

Immediately afterward he redressed himself by the admirable manner in which he acted an old man, a very strong part, in a piece called "The May Queen," and it was on this occasion that the natural bent of his talent was first displayed. Thereafter he appeared constantly in the characters of old men, and made rapid advances in professional reputation. For five years he traveled in the south and southwest, undergoing discomforts and making shifts of which even the modern turn of mind has but the faintest conception, but constantly adding to his experience and self confidence, until he finally made his way back again to Boston and secured an engagement at the Tremont theatre.

The accompanying pictures are of the busts made for the Players' club, New York, by J. Scott Hartley, the well known sculptor.



THE BOOTH BUST.

tor. That of Booth is in the costume of Brutus, and that of Gilbert is as he appeared in Sir Peter Teazle.

WING WHIPPERS.

Booth and Barrett will open their next season together, by playing the week of September 23 at Louisville, for which they will receive \$20,000 cash for seven performances. After that week Mrs. Modjeska will join Booth, while Mr. Barrett will go to Chicago to produce William Young's new tragedy, "Ganelon," at the Chicago opera house on Oct. 7. Mr. Barrett expects to spend between \$40,000 and \$50,000 on this production. About 200 people will be employed in the representation. Minnie Gals will play the leading female role.

The Mirror abuses the topical songster as follows:

We buried him under a chestnut tree,
By the side of the sainted shore;
We planted him deep so he couldn't come up
To respond to another encore.

Richard Marston, the comic painter, writes from Paris that he intends copying one of the principal apartments in the Fontainebleau palace for the representation of Orlin's chamber.

The wardrobe and jewels of Aimee were sold at auction in New York recently. Over \$6,000 was realized. The costumes brought very little.

PALLONE, THE NEW ATHLETIC GAME

It Will Hardly Take the Place of Tennis, Though It Is a Good One.

Palloneo, according to the Italian dictionary, signifies "a large football," whilst pallone has the same meaning in addition to its also standing for "air balloon."

It is with pallone as a football that we have to deal, and that is the name of the game which is coming rapidly into fashion.

eternal search for the dolce far niente there is a vast deal of energy and vivacity, which breaks out in their sportive moods.

It will surprise most people to be told that to the Italians we are in reality indebted for our tennis, racket, lawn tennis and lives, and that pallone, the game from which all spring, is the connecting link between the crude ball games of the ancients and the games we at present amuse ourselves with. The racket was developed out of a glove, and all the large ball games played by the Romans by being struck with the arm protected by a brace, precisely as the game now about to be described is played.

To play pallone properly an open air court is needed of smooth and level surface. It should be about 300 feet in length, with lines marked upon it as upon a lawn tennis ground. The court should be east and west, and along its whole length there must be a wall of about thirty feet in height. The game being a summer recreation, the court should be east and west so that the wall will throw a shadow by which the players are protected. Pallone can be played without this wall, but it is not then the perfect game, since the "bouncing" that can be accomplished "off" it is very important.

The court is divided into two unequal parts, one being ten feet longer than the other. At the very extreme end of this, what is called la battuta (platform) is placed, and upon the court is properly constructed this is, on the western side. On this side planks are placed, one end of each plank being elevated from the court, after the fashion of a spring board.

The ball is a large one, weighing twelve ounces, and perfectly inflated, so that it is very lively in movement and rebound. The inflation is of the utmost importance, as any "dribbles" is destructive to the game. In Italy, during the progress of a game of pallone, assistants known as pallonari are constantly busied in inflating balls not in use, because the violence of the blows very soon deadens their vitality.

The ball is struck by an instrument known as the bracciale, a stout wooden cylinder having at one end a cross piece, which is grasped by the hand after the forearm has been thrust down the bracciale, which is covered with faceted studs that get a grip of the ball. The bracciale weighs about four pounds, and in consequence a tremendous blow can be dealt with it.



PALLONE PLAYER.

The players are three in number, divided into one forward and two backs, who are selected as the best and called prim. These players stand on the respective sides of the dividing line, which may be on the ground, or raised, as in tennis, and known by the names, cordino basso and alti, respectively.

One of the players, the mandrino, on the battuta side, mounts one of the boards and prepares for a run. When ready he rushes down the decline at high speed, and as he reaches the ground he is "fed" with the ball, which he strikes with his full force. No rule of the game compels the one who "feeds" the mandrino to be a player, and the acceptance or rejection of a ball is entirely optional, and he will not receive it unless it is delivered in exactly the way he desires. A good mandrino will, by preference, "take" a ball at about two feet from the ground. Having accepted it, with no limit to the number of refusals to do so, the great point he strives to attain and herein lies the mandrino's skill is to drive it in one vigorous flight beyond the base line of the other side. His favorite first stroke is close to the wall, where a primo battitore has to take it back handed—a by no means easy task.

A ball is generally taken on the volley, because it is very difficult to return if it is allowed to bound. If the mandrino succeeds in sending the ball with which he is first "fed" beyond the base line of the other side, he scores a point, but easy as this may appear in description, it is so difficult that it is seldom accomplished.

A fault is served if the ball should land outside the line parallel to the wall, and it is called the fallo.

The game goes on as in tennis, a point being scored when the ball is not returned by the other side, or when returned out of court, except in the case of volants. As in tennis, the score is fifteen, thirty, forty and game.

This is the game of pallone, as played by the Italians and now being introduced to the notice of our athletes. Doubtless it will be changed in detail as players become acquainted with its general principles and characteristics. In some instances, indeed, already a hard ball has been substituted for an inflated one, but this is injudicious on many accounts, and the number of players has been increased from three to five, but as successions from the opposing sides can be brought up the number of participants in pallone will be suggested by the popularity the game attains. If clubs are formed the number can be very materially increased, and there is always a chance for pre-eminence among players.

Until experts arise, it will be best to adhere as closely as possible to the pure Italian method. There is in this game every opportunity for the display of lightness, quickness and great muscular development, and as it is a most exciting sport it is sure to attract crowds of curious spectators. The changes in method, as regards detail, will not in any way diminish the attractiveness of pallone.

Hamlin's Praise of Searle.

The San Francisco Chronicle is quoted as giving an interview with Hamlin, the champion sculler of the world, in which he is full of praise of the young Australian, Searle, who will meet O'Connor for the championship of the world this autumn in England.

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